

THE LAY-MAN'S MAGAZINE.

"THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND—AND THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF."

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HOW happy is the man who has GOD for his portion! Is he in trouble?—he may pray and find that strength the world cannot over-come. Is he wearied with the dreariness and the disappointments of earthly satisfactions?—he may take his Bible and contemplate those sweet reviving excellencies there pourtrayed, till his heart finds not only relief, but joy. From such contemplation he may go on his pilgrimage content, waiting in happy hope for that eternal blessedness which shall soon be rewarded.

The man of the world is troubled much with ennui—He flies from pleasure to pleasure, seeking rest and finding none—The christian, if he exercise his privileges aright, need know no such pain. He always has an antidote against woe;—if he will but use it, it will always cure him—Sometimes through fear, doubt, or weakness, he may neglect to use it—then to be sure he cannot expect it to relieve him;—but only let him cast aside such weakness, and he will infallibly find comfort—Prayer will help him to more strength, which strength will help him to more joy.—The christian is sometimes like the mariner who has lost his chart and his compass;—tossed about the deep, he knows not where to look, for the moment, for direction; but this state of the christian is brought on by his own unbelief; He has been cold and careless; neglectful of his duty; thoughtless of the goodness of his GOD.—Still, however sinful he has been, he has only to lift his prayer to Heaven, and like the returning prodigal, he will find welcome, the mental feast will be spread and his soul will rejoice in fulness of joy; for

mournings, he shall have alleluiahs, and for tears of woe, the sparklings of delight.

The christian is always happiest when he is most like a little child—perfectly sensible of his own weakness, and panting after the teachings of his Almighty parent. Every feeling of self-sufficiency injures his comfort.—GOD who means his good, will assuredly destroy that feeling in some way or other, either by trying him in the furnace of affliction, or otherwise. Could we be sensible of our state when we are careless and proud, we might know, that if we were the children of love, we were then the nearest to trial. The greater coldness and pride, the more terrible our trial. Humility is a grace peculiarly charming in the eye of Heaven:—Angels, who delight in our happiness, ministering spirits, whose sweet office it is to administer to our consolations, rejoice when they see us humble and child-like; they rejoice in the view of our increased happiness, because they know "GOD giveth grace to the humble," and they rejoice in view of their own increased felicity also, because they then anticipate the office of bearing to us our increase of joy. Are we not sensible that those ministering spirits delight in doing us good?—Assuredly they do; for being pure and happy themselves, they rejoice in the happiness of others; and doubly do they rejoice, when they are chosen as the means of bearing that happiness. Yes, amid the host marshall'd on the Heavenly fields, there is a new thrill of delight, whenever it is known that an increase of joy is to be given to mortals—each stands eager with

expectation that he may be the happy bearer, and when that bearer is designated, so pure, so free from envy are the minds of his fellows, they felicitate him on his honor, and anew sing to their harps extatic strains, praising Him who is ever giving, and ever willing to give.

From the Christian Observer.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CONTROL IN DOMESTIC LIFE.

AS you have cast a comprehensive glance around the extensive circle which your eye commands, you have probably been often called to lament the evils resulting from the absence of habitual self-control.

In the walks of public and of private life ; in man, considered as a part of the great community of the world, and as head of the little sphere in which his lot, as an individual, is cast ; we discern but too many incontrovertible proofs of the grievances which flow from this source. It is to some few of the ills thus originating, as they affect us in domestic life, that I am now desirous of calling the attention of your readers. Where shall we find the man who may not see ample ground to deplore that we are disposed *practically* to deny truths which in *theory* we acknowledge ?— Faith has for its object the *whole* word of God ; and we confess it to be the believer's privilege to walk with his Maker in the exercise of this heavenly principle, and, by the power of God's Spirit, to mortify the *whole* body of sin. We also admit that they who content themselves with aiming at any thing short of this in practice, are too much strangers to their real state, and to the nature of that liberty wherewith Christ has promised to make his people free. But does our life correspond to our profession ?— How often do we see the characters

of some valuable persons clouded, and the influence which they would otherwise so justly gain greatly counteracted, by comparatively small faults ! We are feelingly awake to this fact in the case of our neighbours : but let us bring the matter home to our own bosoms.

It is a trite but important remark, that life is made up of a succession of little parts ; and that each day derives its character from the prevailing ingredients in the multitude of little occurrences which accompany its flight : yet, alas ! on retracing our own steps, in searching out our own hearts, we are disposed to rest satisfied with a very partial and limited survey. We fix upon some few scattered points of peculiar prominence, and, uniting them into a whole, sit down well pleased with the result ; while the innumerable little shades, divisions, and inequalities, which have filled the intermediate space, are lost from the view. Thus do our fleeting hours leave behind them but a vague remembrance of the past ; as a dream when one awaketh, the airy visions float faintly before the eye of memory. Self-love too steps in, and deceives us with her optical illusions. She points to a few bright spots scattered here and there on the surface of life, and, illuminating them with borrowed lustre, dazzles our sight. We yield ourselves the willing victims of her delusory powers, and make no efforts to discover the deception. But if we would know ourselves ; if we desire to see our characters as they appear to our fellow-mortals and to our God ; let us follow ourselves through the successive hours of each day. Let us mark the habits and the tempers which fill up the moments as they pass ; let us labour to discover (to use the words of the excellent Newton) whether "our professions, like that of too many whose sincerity charity would be unwilling to impeach, is

not greatly blemished, notwithstanding our hopes and our occasional comforts, by the breaking forth of unsanctified tempers, and the indulgence of vain desires, anxious cares, and selfish purposes." Let us look back to the hours of freedom and of domestic privacy. Has no impatience, resentment, or repining, been permitted to sully the fair tenor of our course? Has a peevish spirit, a wearying anxiety about mere trifles, a capricious dissatisfaction with the minutiae of family arrangements, and a continual change of plans, never harassed our children or our dependants, and very sensibly tended, by their systematic recurrence, to lessen the aggregate sum of domestic peace? Have low suspicions and petty jealousies never, by being harboured within our bosoms, soured our temper? Has an unaccommodating, self-indulgent spirit never practically led us in any degree to forget the law of love to our neighbour? Let us dwell upon these several heads in our daily private self-examinations; and, it is to be feared, although the shapes which these faults will respectively assume may vary with the varieties which exist in the natural constitutions and habits of the mind, and with local circumstances, that an impartial conscience will condemn very many of us, upon some one or more of these points.—Nor let us deceive ourselves by regarding them as of trivial importance. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" This subject demands our most serious attention. Can we deny that it does so, when we call to mind the words of our Redeemer; "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Can we persuade ourselves that we are laboring to live up to the spirit of this command; that we are guiltless in His eyes to whose view the most secret recesses of the heart are laid open, and who has himself declared that "for every idle

word that men speak they shall give account;" if we are knowingly allowing ourselves in any one habit of sin, however small it may appear to our partial judgments? If we attempt to apologize for our conduct by pleading the constitutional infirmities of our temper, or the debilitating and agitating effects of ill health, it is to be feared that we are but deluding our own hearts; that we are acting under the guidance of the author of all evil, and, in fact, are circumscribing the all-sufficient power of Divine Grace. Let us "judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord." Let us not seek to quiet our consciences by bringing forward excuses which will be swept away, as "the refuges of lies," in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.—Is any one disposed to think that the matter has been too strictly viewed? Let him beware lest he should at last too late discover that he is ruined, by having trusted in this point to the delusive reasonings of his own heart.—Can we, with truth, affirm, that we labour to devote soul and body, every talent, every power, and every faculty, to Him who gave them; that we let our light shine before men to the praise of His grace; when we are habitually tolerating improprieties in our daily conduct which are contrary, to say the least, to the circumspection becoming our profession, which degrade the transforming power of religion in the eyes of the worldly minded, and cast a snare and a rock of offence before the steps of those who look up to us to guide and strengthen them in their course to the heavenly Canaan? We are in our judgments firmly persuaded of the omnipresence of God; we believe that the eyes of the Lord are in every place; yet, to our shame be it remembered, that the presence of a prince, a nobleman, a fellow-worm upon whom we depend, and whose favouring regards we would propiti-

ate, will effectually smooth the ruffled brow, check the impatient word, and banish the rising emotion, while He "in whose favour is life," is little considered! We look back with slight compunction upon faults committed before the Judge of Heaven and Earth, the bare recollection of which would die our cheeks with blushes were we informed that some frail mortal had been privy to our conduct.

Oh that we could truly estimate the evil of sin in its own inherent nature, and our utter helplessness and frailty! We might then be induced to rely for strength upon Him who is "mighty to save." Our spirit, our temper, our conversation, would then more uniformly evince that we live in the continual presence of our God.—Under all the petty vexations and cross incidents to which a fallen race of beings are liable and the vicissitudes of each day may expose us, we should hear a voice going before us, and crying, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Sinless perfection, it is true, we shall not attain while we are sojourners below the skies; but we are awfully deceiving ourselves, if we deem ourselves safe while we are habitually neglecting to pursue "whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." Did we carry our views no farther than the present life, mere selfish motives might, one should have conceived, be sufficiently powerful to constrain us to assume an amiable deportment. But, alas! the words of the poet present but too just a picture of our sin and folly!

Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise, that hast surviv'd the fall!
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and
pure;
Or, tasting, long enjoy thee; too infirm,
Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy chrystal cup.

THE COTTAGER'S WIFE.

"The short and simple annals of the poor."

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PART II.

Although I was in a great measure satisfied as to her sincerity, and could not reasonably doubt that she was a child of God, I was anxious to ascertain the effect of my first visit, and to administer all the instruction and consolation which could be crowded within the apparently short remnant of her days. It was on the following Sunday that I again directed my steps to the village. As I approached it the sound of "the church-going bell" was collecting my rustic congregation. I could not, therefore, proceed to the cottage, till I closed the morning service, and dismissed my little flock with that impressive and truly pastoral blessing, which it were to be wished might never be repeated without the fervour, or heard without the interest, which it so justly deserves. I then hastened to my sick parishioner. The door was opened to me by her husband, a remarkably fine healthy looking young man. "How is your wife," said I, "to-day?" "Very ill, sir." "Worse than when I saw her on Thursday?" "Rather weaker, sir." "Shall I walk up stairs?" "If you please, sir, she will be very glad to see you." M— appeared truly so. "I am sorry to hear that you feel weaker than when I saw you last" "I do indeed, sir, but it is the will of God, and it is my sincere desire that *his* will, and not mine, should be done." "Whatever his will may be," said I, "be assured that it is the best." "I know, sir," she replied, "that all things work together for good to them that love God." "Do you think that you are of that happy number?" "I cannot but hope so, sir, God knows that I love him. I am grieved that I have not served him as I ought, and that

I cannot love him better ; but I often think, sir, if it *should* please God to spare my life, and to raise me up again, how careful I will be not to offend him—how I will try to serve and please him?" "I trust you would, but since you have not done this, as you ought, before, why do you think you should hereafter?" "Sir, I know that my heart is very weak and deceitful, and that I cannot do any thing good of myself ; but I hope I have learnt much from this illness. I see the vanity of every thing but religion, and I think that with God's assistance I should lead a more christian life." "Have you thought much of what I said to you when I was here before?" "I have thought of little else, sir," "And do you believe that your repentance for your past sins is quite sincere?" "I do indeed hope that it is" "Do you feel any real sorrow on account of them and any inward hatred and dread of sin?" "I think I feel, sir, something of that broken and contrite heart which God will not despise." Perceiving unusual symptoms of uneasiness about her, I asked her if she was in much pain. "O yes, sir, but what is my pain to that which my Saviour suffered upon the cross. He was for many hours upon the rack and had none to comfort him ; but I have deserved a great deal more than I suffer and have many mercies." Soon after this, her husband, who had till now been present, left the room, when I took the opportunity of asking M—— whether *he tho't* and felt in any manner as she did upon religious subjects. She shook her head at this question and sighed as she answered, "I wish I could say he did, sir, but I cannot ; my husband is a very sober, honest, well-behaved man, but I am sorry to say, he knows but little about religion." "How then," said I, "came you to think of marrying him. "Because I was a vain and foolish girl, sir, but I have been sorely chastised

for it. I have known but very little happiness since I married. My husband though kind and civil has never liked to join with me in living as christians should, and his family are all worldly people, and living so close to them I have been greatly tried. I have earnestly desired to say with Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord;" But when I have asked my husband to hear me read the Bible, for he is no scholar himself, or to pray with me, he would only tell me it was enough to go to church on Sundays, and that he did not like any Methodistical doings. I have told him that I am no Methodist ; for though I have often been asked to go to the meeting in the next village, I never went, for I was satisfied with the church, and poor Mr. P—— (meaning my predecessor) preached good sermons, and gave me good books, as you will see upon the table ; but I used to tell my husband, that we could not expect the blessing of God upon us, if we did not worship and serve him ; and often, when he has been going to lie down at night, without prayer, I have said to him, "O ! John, how can you go to rest, without begging God's forgiveness and protection ! Suppose your soul should this night be required of you, do you think you should awake in Heaven ? Sometimes when I have spoken thus, sir, I could prevail upon him to pray a few words ; but at other times, he would bid me hold my tongue, and go to sleep. O ! sir, I cannot tell you what I have suffered on his account ; and his family are all of the same way of thinking : but I hope you will be able to do them some good. All these things have made them not very kind to me : but I have much to be forgiven *myself*, sir, and I freely forgive *them*. Indeed, weak as I am, I would go down upon my knees to every one of them, if I could do them any good"—In the midst of this interesting conversation,

we were interrupted by the arrival of two of her sisters, who had come from distant villages to see her—they were considerably older than my parishioner, and manifested an affectionate concern for her which highly gratified me. It is one of the disadvantages of poverty, that it is in general apt to chill the current of the social and domestic feelings, and to produce a hardness and insensibility, which increase rather than diminish its other attendant evils. In the present case, I was delighted to observe all the warmth of tenderness, and liveliness of sympathy, which more frequently distinguish those who are somewhat elevated above the lowest ranks of life, called forth into exercise towards the afflicted subject of this narrative. After the first enquiries of these kind relatives were over, I was about to propose that we should unite in prayer, when my parishioner said that she had a particular favour to beg of me. "What is that?" said I. "You know, sir, Friday is Christmas day, and I suppose you will administer the Sacrament. I have been looking forward a long time in the hope that I should be well enough to go to church, and join in that holy communion. The last time, sir, I ever saw Mr. P—, he talked to me a good while upon the subject, and gave me a book to read upon it. Tho' I had always a great desire to receive the Lord's supper, I have been afraid of taking it unworthily. I am, indeed, not worthy to pick up the crumbs under my master's table; but Jesus said, 'Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you.'— 'True,' said I, 'but do you think that by merely receiving the sacrament you will have this life?' 'No, sir, I know that I must have a true faith in Christ.' Yes, you must feed on Him, as our church says, 'in your heart, by faith, with thanksgiving.' That is my sincere de-

sire, sir. God knows how earnestly I have longed for an opportunity of going to the Lord's Table. You know, sir, Mr. P— was taken ill just before the last time that it was to be administered in our church, and I have been confined myself almost ever since; but now, if you think I am in a fit state to receive the sacrament, I should feel it to be the greatest blessing and comfort, if you would be so kind as to give it to me on Friday." Upon this, I read to her several passages of Scripture, together with parts of the communion service, which particularly mention the qualifications of acceptable communicants; and after conversing some time longer on the subject, and telling her that I should willingly comply with her request on Christmas-day, I asked who would partake of it with her. "I expect," said M—, "that my poor dear mother will be here, if she can bear the journey; and she will, I am sure, be glad to join with me." "And will not your husband?" said I, who was now returned to the sick room. "Oh, how I wish he would!" answered his wife. "Will you not John?" "I don't know what to say to it M—. It is a very solemn thing, and I am no scholar. I doubt I am not good enough." "We shall never be good enough of ourselves," said M—. "That is very true indeed," I replied; "but will you be better by staying away from the sacrament? Should not every christian be anxious to obey his Saviour's last command to remember his dying love and to hold communion with him in the way he has appointed? Though you are no scholar, yet are you not a sinner? And should you not be glad to know as much of your Saviour as possible, and to devote yourself to his service?" "I should, to be sure sir." "Besides," I added, "if you are not fit to receive the sacrament, are you fit either to live, or to

die, as a christian. Think seriously of this, pray to God to direct and enable you to perform this duty in a profitable manner. Consider too the uncertain state of your poor wife. It is very probable that you may not have to live much longer together in this world. Now, if it should please God shortly to take her from you, would it not afford you some consolation, when she was gone, to reflect that you had joined her in this most solemn service of religion ; that you had commemorated together the death of Him, to whom alone we must look for salvation ; and by this united act of faith and hope had enjoyed an earnest of a blessed union hereafter in heaven ? The young man was evidently affected by these considerations, and replied with emotion, " What you say is very true, sir. I wish I could say I would do as you wish on Friday. I will think of it, and try what I can do to bring my mind to a fit state ; but I cannot promise, sir. I am in great trouble, and scarcely know how to think of any thing. But, said I, you should at least try to think of religion, for it is God only who can comfort you ; and the illness of your wife is a call to you to turn to him. Jesus also invites you, now that you are in trouble, to come to him for rest ; and he is ready to give you a pledge of it in the Lord's Supper. He seemed to feel the truth of what I said ; but partly from ignorance, and partly from that corruption which always opposes the turning of the heart to God, he held back from saying any thing more. How common, and yet how lamentable a case is this ! Men neglect and refuse to make God their friend ; and when amidst the various changes of this mortal life, they fall into distress, they know not what to do, or whither to flee for support and comfort. Yet God hath said, " Call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou

shalt glorify me." O ! why will not all that are in affliction listen to this gracious invitation, and, like his children, find a place of refuge.— Fearing, however, that the young man was not as yet sufficiently informed as to the nature of the sacrament, or religiously enough disposed to receive it, I was unwilling, at this time, to urge him any farther, but contented myself with exhorting him to look to God for direction and help. I closed this second visit by praying with the afflicted party assembled in the sick room. M—— joined in every petition with a degree of animation and fervour which I have seldom seen surpassed, and expressed her gratitude in a manner which left me no room to doubt the reality of a divine work in her heart. On leaving the room, I gave her a copy of "The Dairyman's Daughter," thinking that she might derive both instructions and comfort from a history which exhibits some circumstances very similar to those of her own case. I was, however, agreeably surprised to find that the benevolent apothecary, whom I had met on my first visit, had been before hand with me in this present. " I have contrived to read part of that little book, sir," said M——, " though not without difficulty. That young woman died of the disorder in which I am. She was a true christian, sir, and I have been much comforted by many things that are related of her. God grant that I may be like her." " I trust," said I, " that by the grace of God you will be like her, both living and dying. Fix your faith and love on the same gracious Saviour in whom she trusted, and you will enjoy similar peace and consolation, and the same blessed hope of eternal happiness ! God bless you M——, may he support, sanctify and comfort you, while you remain here below, and make you daily better prepared for the heavenly world." " God bless you

sir," was the reply. "for all your kind instructions and prayers. I cannot tell you how much they have comforted me."

About two days after my second visit to M—, I was told that some one from S—, the village in which she lived, wished to see me. As I had desired her to send for some little comforts which her humble circumstances could not afford, I took for granted that this was her messenger; but instead of the person whom I expected on this errand, I was surprised to find that it was M—'s mother, whom my readers may recollect she told me she was hoping shortly to see. She was a decent looking old woman, with an air of peculiar meekness and gravity, and apparently bending more under the weight of trouble than of years. "Pray rest yourself," said I, as she was attempting to rise. "You must be tired after your long walk." "A little, sir," was the reply; "but more distressed by my poor dear daughter's illness." "How is she to-day?" "Very ill, indeed, sir; she cannot hold it long, I think." "I fear not," said I, "but do not be too much distressed. Your daughter is, I trust, a real christian, and preparing for a better world." "Ah! sir, I trust she is. She is following her dear sister, who died about two years ago. Thank God *she* was ready to go, and no doubt *she* is in heaven; and my poor M— is very like her; but it is a great affliction to lose such good children in my old age." "It is, indeed," I replied; "and I feel much for you. I have lost children too, though not grown up; but although it is a heavy trial, *the blessed hope of their being happy for ever in heaven is an unspeakable consolation*. Now, as far as I am able to judge, I think your daughter is a true believer in Jesus Christ, and interested in his salvation." "It is a great comfort to me to hear you say so, sir. Indeed, I do think so myself. She

was always inclined to religion from a child; but she has attended more to it within the last two or three years than ever." "She appears to me," said I, "to be in a very hopeful frame of mind. I cannot look into her heart; but if she is sincere in her professions, I cannot but think that she is in the way to heaven."—"Why to be sure, sir, as you say, we cannot look into the heart; but *it is of no use to pretend to religion, if we are not sincere in it*; and so I tell M—, and indeed I think she is sincere." "Pray, when did you come to see your daughter?" "Last Sunday, sir, just after you left her. I have been in a good deal of trouble about walking over on the *Sabbath*; but I trust the Lord will forgive me, if I did wrong. I did not hear, till then, that she was so ill, and put off coming to see her as long as possible, for the journey is almost too much for me at my age; but I was afraid I should hardly see her alive, if I did not set off directly, or be stopped next day by the weather, this winter time; and all the way I came my thoughts were taken up with God and heavenly things."

[To be continued.]

Lay-Man's Magazine.

The Lay-Man's Magazine has been offered to the public, at so low a price, as to put it in the power of all inclined to patronize a work of its character, to pay for it—The subscriptions received, are, however, not yet equal to the expense of publication: The object of the publisher being more to do good than to make money by it, he is willing to persevere, as long as he is able to meet the expenditures;—to assist him in accomplishing this, he is under the necessity of asking prompt payment from all who have subscribed. Those who pay for the Magazine, in two months from the time of its commencement, will be charged one dollar and fifty cents—where payment is longer delayed, two dollars per annum will be expected.